DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 897 IR 018 546

AUTHOR Hufford, Jon R.; Johnson, William T.
TITLE Developing a Program of Internet Workshops and Seminars at Texas Tech University Library--1993 to the Present.
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at "The Universe at Your Fingertips: Continuing Web Education." Conference Sponsored by the Librarians Association of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Friends of the UCSB Library, and the Black Gold Cooperative Library System Reference Committee (Santa Barbara, CA, April 25, 1997). For papers from the proceedings of this conference, downloaded and printed out from the UCSB Web site, see IR 018 545-561.
AVAILABLE FROM Electronic version: http://www.library.ucsb.edu/universe/hufford.html
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Libraries; Faculty; Higher Education; *Internet; Library Extension; *Library Instruction; Library Personnel; Library Planning; *Library Services; *Online Searching; Reference Services; User Needs (Information); *Users (Information); *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Historical Background; Texas Tech University

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the development since late 1993 of a program of Internet workshops and seminars offered to the Texas Tech University community. The discussion includes the program's history; the evolving process of planning, organizing, advertising, and managing; the politics involved; the effort to motivate colleagues to participate; the quest for new equipment to support the program; and participant training. Also included is a description of the goals of the workshops and seminars and the decision to offer new sessions that will more closely match the interests of particular groups of library patrons. The new sessions are designed to assist patrons in finding Internet resources on such topics as finding a job, traveling in the United States and abroad, and locating family and community resources on the Internet. In addition, the Library has made an effort to attract the off-campus community to the sessions and has plans for improving the program in the future. This paper provides practical information for librarians involved in the early stages of developing a series of Internet workshops and seminars. Also, it provides useful information to librarians who already have programs but would like to find out what other librarians are doing. (Author/SWC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 412 897

Developing a Program of Internet Workshops and Seminars at Texas Tech University Library -- 1993 to the Present

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Jon R. Hufford
Coordinator of User Instruction
Texas Tech University

William T. Johnson
Science Librarian
Texas Tech University

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Jon R. Hufford
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Copyright 1997, Jon Hufford and Bill Johnson. Used with permission.

Abstract

The paper discusses the development since late 1993 of a program of Internet workshops and seminars offered to the Texas Tech University community. The discussion includes the program's history; the evolving process of planning, organizing, advertising, and managing; the politics involved; the effort to motivate colleagues to participate; the quest for new equipment to support the program; and participant training. Also included is a description of the construction and use of the TTU Library's Web page to support the instructional goals of the workshops and seminars and the recent decision to offer new sessions that will more closely match the interests of particular groups of library patrons. These new sessions are designed to assist patrons in finding Internet resources on such topics as finding a job, traveling in the United States and abroad, and locating family and community resources on the Internet. In addition, the authors comment on the Library's effort to attract the off-campus community to the sessions and the plans for improving the program in the future. This paper provides practical information for librarians involved in the early stages of developing a series of Internet workshops and seminars. Also, it provides useful information to librarians who already have programs but would like to find out what other libraries are doing.

Introduction

The mission of the Texas Tech University Library includes supporting the teaching and research

IR018546

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

research activities of the University. Faculty and teaching assistants request library instruction sessions throughout the year, and informal instruction is provided daily at the Reference and Government Documents desks. Additionally, the University, situated centrally on the South Plains of West Texas, is the focus of educational, medical, commercial, and technological activities covering a wide geographical area. Therefore the University Library is in an excellent position to offer leadership in the delivery of information to both the campus and the off-campus communities. We expect that library instruction will always play an important part in the delivery of this information and that Internet technology will play an ever greater role in the endeavor.

The University Library's program of Internet workshops began in November, 1993. Since then, Internet sessions have been offered several times a year. Many of the workshops have focused on broad academic disciplines, including the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Recent workshops and new seminars have focused on such topics as "How to find a job," "Traveling or relocating in the U.S.," "Improving your grades by using the Internet," and "Strengthening families with electronic resources on the World Wide Web." In addition, we have created several Web pages and placed them on the Library's Web site. They are used as instructional aids in the workshops and seminars, as well as in other library instruction sessions. Our approach to these Internet workshops includes implementing effective planning, organizing, and management procedures; continually improving our presentation styles; keeping up with new developments; acquiring the best instructional technology; and seeking new ideas to attract attendees.

Background

1993/94 Academic Year

There were three librarians at the Texas Tech University Library who were proficient at using the Internet in the Spring of 1993. They could access and navigate gophers, use Telnet, Veronica, and Jughead, and transfer files. None of these librarians was interested in providing formal Internet instruction to their library colleagues or other members of the campus community in a classroom or workshop environment, though they all provided informal one-on-one assistance to persons who were interested. Previous to 1994, the campus community did not see the Library as a provider of Internet instruction. Rather, instructors in the University's Advanced Technology Learning Center (ATLC), part of the University's Academic Computing Services, and a handful of faculty members provided most of the Internet instruction available on campus at the time. Each semester the instructors offered short courses in the ATLC's personal computer laboratory, which is located in the basement of the library building. Any campus-affiliated person could sign up for these free one-session classes and learn how to use the Internet.

Shortly after March 1993, the provision of Internet instruction for the campus community became an important goal of the Texas Tech University Library's User Instruction program. The first task in accomplishing this goal was to persuade librarians to become involved in Internet instruction, first by learning its components and then by participating in workshops and seminars. In time, six librarians in the Information Services Department volunteered to participate. They began by sharing the knowledge and expertise they had picked up on their own. These librarians signed up for ATLC workshops for more formal training. Because some of them were liaisons for various academic departments with library instruction responsibilities in assigned subject areas,

they soon began offering occasional Internet training to graduate-level and upper-level undergraduate classes. They sought opportunities to persuade faculty and teaching assistants to let them include Internet instruction along with the routine database demonstrations that were being given to students. However, the 1993/94 academic year afforded only limited opportunities to provide Internet instruction using this approach.

Once the Texas Tech University Libraries' Coordinator of User Instruction completed his Internet training, library-sponsored workshops were scheduled. The ATLC's microcomputer laboratory was used because the Library does not have its own laboratory. A workshop format was chosen for these sessions because past experience had shown us that students learn better when they have hands-on practice, and because several faculty members and teaching assistants requested that we offer their students guided hands-on practice in the use of on-line databases. The workshops were open to all university-affiliated persons.

At the first Internet workshop, offered in November, 1993, the Coordinator of User Instruction and an ATLC staff member offered a two-hour session titled "Finding Library Resources on the Internet." The ATLC staff member served as a back-up resource person who could answer questions requiring an in-depth knowledge of the technology. The session began with a brief history of the Internet, a description of some traditional library information resources available on it, and suggestions for basic search procedures and strategies to use when browsing in a particular site. Most of the session was devoted to describing and demonstrating Telnet sites such as "Library of Congress Information System (LOCIS)," "Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL)," "Library of Congress Machine-Assisted Realization of the Virtual Electronic Library (LC MARVEL)," and "Federal Information Exchange (FEDIX)," as well as some listservs and bulletin boards. Each site was described, emphasizing the information available and its research value, and then some major element or feature of the site was demonstrated. The last half-hour of the workshop was set aside for attendees to practice while the presenters assisted them on a one-to-one basis. Handouts for each site, including the address, were distributed at all sessions so that attendees could use them to access sites on their own.

This first Internet workshop set the tone for those that were offered throughout 1994. They were informal, and questions were welcome at any time. An ATLC staff member was present, but he did not participate in the presentations and demonstrations.

1994/95 Academic Year

New developments that took place in the Library during the 1994/95 academic year led to changes in the way the Internet workshops were conducted. Three additional subject librarians were hired, each with instructional responsibilities in their subject areas. All three were eager to learn about the Internet and to teach it in a workshop environment. In addition, some of the librarians already employed at Texas Tech University, but not yet involved in the workshops, began to volunteer to participate. In an effort to give all interested librarians opportunities to get involved and to encourage them to continue their involvement, we began to team-teach the workshops. Teams of three or four librarians presented two-hour workshops during the year. Two or three workshops were held each semester.

The workshops offered in the Fall of 1994 included descriptions and demonstrations of the Internet components, including gophers, Telnet, Veronica, Archie, File Transfer

Protocol, Lynx, and Bookmarks for accessing favorite sites. The sites selected for the demonstrations tended to be general gopher and Telnet sites that would have information of interest to faculty and students from several disciplines. The last workshop organized in this way was offered in February, 1995 as a "U.S. Government Resources on the Internet" workshop.

Another new approach to the Internet workshops began in the Spring of 1995. Three workshops were offered: one each for the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Each team was composed of the subject librarians whose disciplines fell within that academic area. Each member of a team was allotted about 25 minutes to demonstrate sites appropriate for his or her subject areas. The Coordinator of User Instruction remained responsible for planning, organizing, advertising, scheduling the ATLC laboratory, and supervising any preparatory activities needing to be done beforehand.

1995/96 and 1996/97 Academic Years

Internet workshops offered during the 1995/96 academic year and into 1997 were based on the model that was established in the Fall of 1995. The team-teaching and orientation towards a specific group of disciplines have continued. We continued to offer sciences, social sciences, and humanities workshops each semester. With occasional minor adjustments, this approach has been working quite well. During the last year and a half, greater emphasis has been placed on teaching the World Wide Web, including browsers and search engines. In particular, we have concentrated on Netscape and a handful of search engines, including Yahoo and Alta Vista. Telnet, e-mail, listserv, and Lynx procedures are still taught, though to a much lesser extent. Attendees seem to appreciate the way the recent workshops have been done.

One important recent change was that the Texas Tech University Library began offering Internet seminars to off-campus persons. Since Texas Tech University is a public institution, the Library must offer many of its services to the general public. On the other hand, the ATLC's policy does not allow off-campus persons to use their facilities, including the personal computer laboratory that the Library uses for its Internet workshops. The Library therefore had to use its own classroom for these outreach sessions. This User Instruction classroom is equipped with a single computer, projector, and screen for demonstrations and lectures. Much of our library instruction takes place in this room. Occasionally, Internet demonstrations are given there to graduate-level classes. However, it is impossible to offer hands-on practice there. Therefore, instead of offering two-hour workshops to off-campus library patrons, we began offering them one or two-hour seminars that included lectures and demonstrations.

Management

The process of planning, organizing, advertising, and supervising the Internet workshops has evolved from a rough beginning to the point where all of the presenters feel comfortable with the way the workshops are presently done. We hold periodic self-evaluations where we use the attendee evaluations to open discussion on ways to improve our sessions. During a self-evaluation meeting after the "U.S. Government Resources on the Internet" workshop given in February, 1995, the three presenters shared their concerns that too much had been covered during the session. Those attendees who

filled out evaluation forms seemed to agree. Comments on the forms indicated that the information was overwhelming and that not enough time was spent explaining basic procedures.

In addition, these presenters acknowledged discomfort when answering some of the more involved technical questions on Internet operations. They agreed that File Transfer Protocol procedures were the most difficult to handle. Yet, they felt that there was no need for an ATLC staff member to participate in their future Internet workshops, ATLC staff could do a much better job of answering these kinds of technical questions in their own short courses. While they, as librarians, could excel at identifying resources on the Internet, evaluating those sites, and demonstrating how to browse through the sites to find relevant information. The presenters decided that they would refer attendees with technical questions such as these to ATLC staff.

Since several of the TTU librarians are responsible for selecting and instructing in specific subject areas, they agreed that the workshops would work best if the presenters continued to focus on subject areas relevant to their own subject. The idea of team-teaching the workshops remained attractive because by covering several disciplines they attracted larger numbers of attendees. The presenters also felt that workshop attendees, who did not seem to mind two-hour sessions, would find them more interesting with the differing teaching styles of three or four presenters.

Advertising the workshops improved from one year to the next. The earliest workshops had been included on the ATLC's lists of short courses. This was the only advertising they received in 1993/94. The lists were distributed at the ATLC Information Desk and by campus mail to faculty and staff. Starting early in 1994, announcements of forthcoming sessions were included on-line at the Library's "Information About the Library" option on the Library Information System. Starting with the Fall of 1994, flyers announcing our Internet workshops were sent to all faculty and graduate students in the academic disciplines covered by the workshop. Also, announcements were made in the campus newspaper. Advertising this way helped to increase attendance.

We tried a number of things to help assure the success of the workshops. Several of the Internet handouts used in 1994/95 were obtained from various sites using File Transfer Protocol. Others, such as the bibliographies of additional Internet sites not demonstrated in the workshop, were authored by the presenters or other librarians. Another way we tried to ensure success was that presenters developed overhead transparencies to show sites and explain search procedures. These transparencies were used from time to time because of occasional problems accessing some of the sites to be demonstrated. Evaluation forms were distributed at every workshop during the 1994/95 academic year and the attendees were urged to fill them out. All librarians involved in the workshops reviewed the completed forms regularly. Occasionally, follow-up meetings were held to discuss the evaluations in order to determine whether improvements or changes were needed.

Presentation Skills

Internet workshops require several teaching skills, some of which are not normally used in lectures or even in demonstrations. In addition to the basic skills that will enable one to effectively teach the subject to the class, a presenter needs to know how to perform a

successful on-line demonstration in front of the class. To do this, he or she needs to know how to use the computer and accessory equipment proficiently, how to access Internet sites, and how to search these sites.

However, the Library's Internet workshops require additional skills. Presenters have to learn how to participate as part of a team. Team-teaching requires cooperation and its own set of skills. In addition, we encourage attendees to ask questions at any time. Occasionally, a presenter may have to stop the demonstration and help someone who is having trouble with a computer, try a different approach if he or she cannot connect to a Web site, or get out overhead transparencies if the system is down. Sometimes, a question will determine the direction the demonstration takes. The workshops include hands-on practice segments at the end of the class. The one-on-one instruction given during this practice and the necessity to handle questions at any time during the demonstrations require that the presenters learn and practice active teaching and learning skills in the workshops.

A program of continuing education at the Library offers librarians opportunities to learn teaching skills from experts. A faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies who teaches public speaking has given two presentations to the library staff: "How to Give Good Classroom Presentations to Undergraduates" and "Team-teaching Methods." He will continue to give us training in teaching basic skills. A faculty member in the Classics and Modern Languages Department will give us a two-hour workshop on "Active Learning Methods" in May, 1997. In addition, the Coordinator of User Instruction attends the Library Orientation-Instruction Exchange (LOEX) conferences each year and shares what he has learned there about team-teaching, active learning, and whatever else may be useful to his colleagues. This training and sharing of information is helpful; however, most of what is learned and used to improve the workshops and seminars comes through experience and the informal sharing of information that takes place at small meetings.

Politics/Motivation

In 1993, some Texas Tech University librarians began to talk about the role they could play in teaching the Internet to the campus community. They saw the traditional library skills of acquiring, cataloging, organizing, and accessing information as very applicable to Internet organization and use. Peer pressure and the need to keep up with new technological developments persuaded other librarians to accept this point of view.

These librarians received encouragement from ATLC staff. The ATLC staff had the computer science background needed to teach the technology, systems, and operational procedures involved with the Internet. However, they lacked the basic skills that librarians use at the Reference desk. Several ATLC staff members involved in teaching short courses readily admitted that librarians, with their unique searching and organizing skills, were well suited to teach the Internet to people who are interested in finding information. In fact, they were reluctant to teach courses that emphasized searching Internet sites for information. They encouraged librarians to "take charge" in this area. Under these circumstances, it was not difficult to schedule the workshops in the ATLC's microcomputer laboratory.

Equipment

Until late 1995, TTU librarians had been using an old computer located in the Library's User Instruction Room for class demonstrations of the on-line catalog and CD-ROM databases. This computer was slow and, though the Internet was available on it, the World Wide Web was not. As the Web developed, it became obvious that we needed new equipment. A grant proposal for a Pentium computer, an LCD projector, and a large screen was approved in July, 1995. This equipment has made it possible to offer large numbers of Internet demonstrations.

As wonderful as this new equipment is, it does not permit us to offer attendees hands-on practice. Our computer limitations were recognized as early as 1993. However, there seemed to be no hope of the Library having its own laboratory until the University's administration decided that the library building would be renovated. The Coordinator of User Instruction immediately began sharing his idea of creating a computer laboratory to support library instruction with the Library's administrators. The idea was accepted and architects' plans for the renovation include a laboratory of thirty microcomputers and a large classroom to seat one hundred and contain two computers, two projectors, and two screens. This room will be capable of being divided into two classrooms. Once the Library's microcomputer laboratory is completed, it will become the location of the Library's Internet workshops and library instruction sessions requiring hands-on practice.

Library's Web Site

A small group of interested and technically proficient librarians was chosen to develop the Library's Web page in 1996. The group established an "information delivery" focus and sought to provide a structure to the Library's Web site that would continue to serve the Library in a fluid environment. The actual information was relatively general including, but not limited, to such items as library locations, mission, hours, staff, reference tools, and departmental descriptions.

The information content grew during the developmental period and became much more oriented toward bibliographic instruction. The Web site is now linked to the Library Information System, which includes the Libraries' on-line catalog, other libraries' catalogs, and about additional forty databases; bibliographies in such areas as herpetology and plant genetics; directories to federal science sites and Texas organizations; and bilingual guides on developing Web sites. A few guides to our local collection of Reference works and periodicals have also been developed and an on-line exhibit of the Koger History of Science Collection is in its early stages of development. These resources are demonstrated in our Internet workshops and seminars.

Future Developments

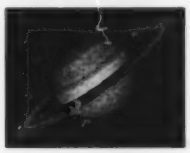
The best preparation for the future is to be aware of new developments and to be flexible. TTU librarians will continue to develop the teaching skills needed to do successful Internet workshops. We will continue to attend conferences and continuing education classes to keep up with new developments, share what we have learned, and invite experts to give us additional training. Practice and looking for new Web sites is important. Also, acquiring the best instructional technology will help make all of this possible.

As discussed previously, our Internet workshops are also open to the off-campus community. Texas Tech University alumni, home schoolers, business persons, church workers, as well as public and special librarians come to these seminars. The seminars are offered at various times during the semester to suit the needs of the attendees. As the level of interest in the Internet grows in the Lubbock area, The Texas Tech University librarians expect to increase the level of their involvement in these sessions for the off-campus community.

Distance learning is another area where Internet teaching needs to be increased. Understanding the needs of remote students and developing ways to meet their unique information needs will be increasingly important in the coming years. For example, we will need to develop methods to teach our remote students how to use Web resources like the "Playa Lakes Research Bibliography" which offers not only links to Internet resources and citations to the print literature but also a growing body of full text documents with images (Johnson 1996).

References

Johnson, William. 1996. The Library component of distance learning: extended campus services -- the Junction experience. *Texas Library Journal* 72 (4): 182-187.



Direct questions or comments about this page to webmaster@library.ucsb.edu.

This is an official University of California, Santa Barbara Library web page. Please read the Mission Statement and Policies and Procedures regarding this server. You may also view statistics for this server.

HTML 3.2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE